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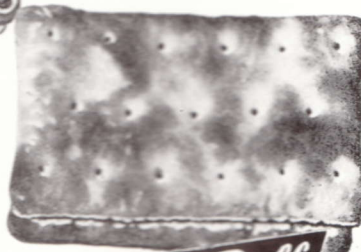
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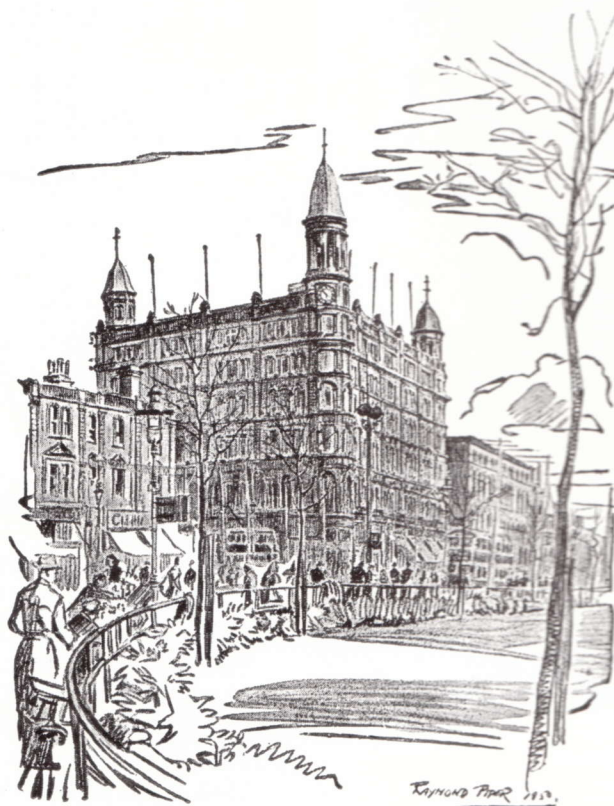
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PAOLO SILVERI

MANAGER

PAOLO SILVERI was born at Ofena in the Aquila province of Italy where his father had a farm. On leaving school joined the Italian Navy. Not finding this to his liking he went into the tailoring business until called up for the army.

On securing his discharge, he commenced to study singing under Perugini, eventually proceeding to the Academy at Rome.

Silveri first came to England with the San Carlo Opera Company in 1946 and in 1947 he joined the Covent Garden Opera Company. Here he sang many famous baritone roles in English and he believes that he was the first Italian baritone to do so. Since then Silveri has sung in most of the leading opera houses in Europe.

Last year he created something of a sensation by singing the difficult tenor role of Othello in Dublin but he says he has no intention of becoming a tenor. While continuing his career as a singer, Silveri is associated with Maestro Botti as an operatic impresario.



GIUSEPPE RUISI

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Comes to Belfast on his first appearance in Ireland. Has conducted at all the leading opera houses in Rome, Milan, Venice, as well as in Holland, France, and Portugal.

BRUNO NOFRI

PRODUCER

Born in Milan. After graduating from high school he studied music at the Academy of Drama. From 1927 to 1930 he worked for La Scala, Milan, as assistant to producer, Caramba. From 1931 to 1938 was assistant producer at Teatro Reale dell' Opera Roma. In 1938 he started his career as producer of opera and since then has produced more than 160 operas at major opera houses all over the world.



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Why Opera at all?

Opera? What on earth has this peculiar amalgam of music, words, and stagecraft got to do with art? Is it some sort of gigantic hoax perpetrated on the simple, asinine, snobs who want to do the right thing? Is it a kind of genteel variety show designed to amuse for an evening people who cannot take their music straight?

Let's suppose that it is, and see where it gets us. There is a wide assortment of confections to suit all tastes.



Italian opera, for example. Now here is the real beginning of it all. A rum-tum-tum accompaniment from the orchestra which will fit either tragedy or comedy. A tenor and a soprano in love, with an opposing Fate who is either a baritone or a bass. A simple story well calculated not to tax our intelligence too much, and from then on nothing but tune upon tune which must be applauded or hissed.

From the tenor we can expect vast reserves of wind-power to sustain those long high notes, from the soprano a pretty lightness, fleet-footed agility, and if we are lucky a sense of balance that defeats the common wobble or tender tremolo.

Perhaps we prefer a more profound approach to our evening's musical entertainment. German opera? Wagner? Well now, none of us is likely to get to the bottom of that in a hurry. The psychological significance of *The Ring* or *Parsifal* or *Tristan* is not the sort of thing that becomes apparent by just watching and listening.

This requires real study. Many long nights of preparation, preferably philosophical argument and enlightened introspection are necessary before the meaning becomes clear. Those heroic sopranos and tenors are ripe in years and mature in appearance because all their singing lives they've been preparing for this.

They've built up their voices and their figures just so that they can stand the long night's strain and die their love death or be received in heaven still going strong and undefeated. It is our job, if we're going to enjoy it, to understand why they're doing it and to appreciate, as Verdi put it, both "Those beautiful moments and those interminable quarters-of-an-hour."

But, maybe, the straightforward Italian and the obscure German are too unrefined. French, then? But a word of warning here. French opera often involves that other so-called art-form—ballet, and the French have always thought that spectacle was a highly desirable part of operatic performances.

The biggest figure in French operatic history, Berlioz, had on the whole a poor deal from his compatriots, and choice is mostly restricted to the facile and sentimental Gounod, or Bizet of the light touch.

We can of course think of that most civilised French opera composer Debussy and his *Pelléas et Mélisande*, (rather like Wagner without his counterpoint and his symphonic style) which is certainly more firmly stuck to its drama and libretto than most opera scores.

It is unlikely, if we are determined to be thought civilised, that we will patronise English opera. The English, or rather British, forte is surely good substantial home cooking and beer rather than the serious musical theatre.



TO-DAY'S NEWS TO-DAY

Belfast
Telegraph

**THE NEWSPAPER WITH THE LARGEST
CIRCULATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Handel, of course, there's a chap who was a Britisher (through the back-door of naturalisation and therefore second-rate) but his stuff is not often seen on the stage. Britten seems to get his name known on the Continent, and there is a lot of good tenor material in most of his operas, but he flopped a bit over the Coronation, and it's hard to know where he stands in the right circles.

Vaughan Williams looks a big man here, and then you find your friends in Paris and Rome have never heard of him. No, on the whole it's better to steer clear of jingo in opera, and flatter the foreigner.

Russia now, there's a country we ought to get to know better. Good solid gloom and depression is what they're best at. Mad kings and millers, suicides and sudden deaths, oppressions and misery, all sung in a language that practically nobody knows.



Language? Now this is something we'll have to straighten out. English or foreign, that's the question.

Italian doesn't matter—the story is apparent, the sentiments plain, the meaning obvious. German plots and libretti have to be studied in advance anyway, and we know them by the time we hear them. French we learnt at school, and everybody knows it. Russian is too good to listen to for a translation to be worthwhile.

English is the one language that could do with a good translation. Either the libretto is hopelessly inaudible or it is blush-makingly ass-like. Perhaps Esperanto is the answer.

But now we come back to our first question. What has opera got to do with art? If there is any other art form which has to put up with all the hazards, all the draw-backs, all the easily laughed-at incidentals that accompany practically any operatic performance, then you can be sure that King Billy was a Papist.

Any other art-form that tried to cope with half the difficulties has died long ago. But opera survives. This is because it is a lively art, a means of arousing emotions, of conveying ideas, of stimulating thought, and at the same time providing entertainment (in the fuller meaning of the word) as rich as any you can find.

Its very richness means that it costs a lot. An operatic performance contains an orchestral concert, a choral work, a vocal recital, and a stage painting. If these are cheaply bought, the final result shows it.

In Northern Ireland we are reluctant to think less well of our artistic appreciation than that of other places. Opera means music, it means the stage, it means pictorial art, and in the fusion of all three it represents the best investment for our artistic endowment.



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RENATA ONGARO

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Renata Ongaro is a young coloratura soprano who has had a rapid rise to fame. One of her earliest performances as Gilda in *Rigoletto* during the season at Palermo earned her great praise from the critics but it was during the summer season of 1957 when singing at the world famous arena at Verona that she became a star overnight.

The opera was again *Rigoletto* and after her singing of "Caro nome" the entire audience in this huge arena rose to its feet and refused to be placated until the aria had been repeated. One Press report at the time said that it was a remarkable performance for a singer with only four years experience and it went on to thank the authorities for allowing the audience to hear "such a talented singer . . . who should go far." This brilliant soprano is coming direct to Belfast for this, her first visit to Ireland.

AURELIANA BELTRAMI

SOPRANO

Studied in Milan and having won some singing competitions made her début at a very early age showing herself to be an artist of exceptional talent. Her career advanced rapidly, taking her very soon to the Scala, Milan, and to the principal Italian and foreign theatres.



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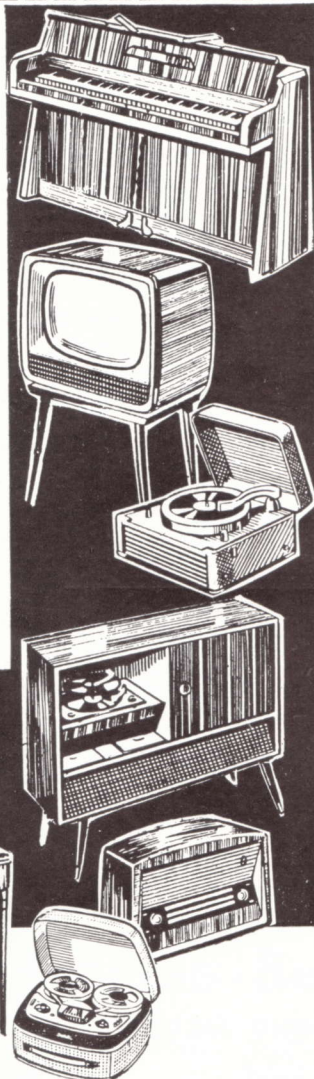
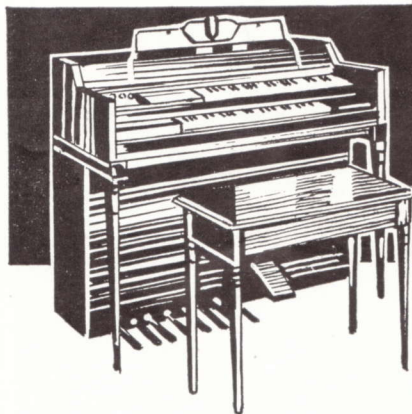
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RUGGERO BONDINO

TENOR

Born in Udine in December, 1930. Winner of the competition held by the Milan Lyrical and Concert Society in July, 1957, he made his début in *Bohème* at the Teatro Nuovo in Milan.

After his début many important contracts followed immediately. He has sung in many Italian opera centres as well as in Spain, France, Belgium, Switzerland, England, Luxembourg and Germany.

FELICE SCHIAVI

BARITONE

One of the most beautiful voices among the young Italian singers. He made his début at the Teatro Nuovo in Milan. He has already sung most successfully in important Italian and European theatres.



LORENZO SABATUCCI

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ENZO SORDELLO

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He is a young artist but already he has attained international fame, having sung at the Scala, Milan, and the Metropolitan, New York, and in all the principal opera houses. The purity and spontaneity of his singing, his musicality and accuracy render him an artist of a high level.

EZIO BOSCHI

TENOR

An artist of great versatility. He has specialised in character rôles. He has sung in all the principal theatres and has taken part in two tours of England and interpreted the part of Cassio in *Othello* at Covent Garden, London.



LORIS GAMBELLI

BASS

Was born in Rome and studied under the famous baritone Riccardo Stracciari. He won the International Singing Competition at Fabriano, and there made his début in Donizetti's *La Favorita*. He has since sung in many other Italian opera houses, including the Grande in Brescia and the Sociale in Mantova. Abroad he has taken part in the seasons in Madrid and in Dublin.

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Lucia di Lammermoor

Lucia di Lammermoor, usually held to be one of the two or three masterpieces of the *bel canto* opera, is an adaptation of a novel by Sir Walter Scott. The opera was first produced in 1835 at the S. Carlo Theatre in Naples.

The basis of the plot concerns Lord Henry Ashton, who had been plotting against the king of Scotland for some time, and his financial troubles. To rescue himself from his difficulties, he has arranged to marry his sister, Lucy, to Lord Arthur Bucklaw; but as yet he has told Lucy nothing of this. Lucy herself is in love with Edgar of Ravenswood; but she also has kept this attachment secret, since a feud exists between her family and the Ravenswoods.

In the opening scene of ACT I we see Norman, one of Lord Henry's followers, Henry himself, and Raymond, his chaplain, in a grove near Lord Henry's castle. Henry tells of his sister's lack of interest in marriage. The chaplain thinks this is because Lucy is still mourning for her mother, who has died recently. Norman has the more sinister explanation: Lucy loves a stranger whom she meets in the park. Norman has sent his hunters to find out the identity of the intruder. Their chorus follows, in which they tell of their discovery. It is the hated Edgar whom she loves. In an aria which grows into an ensemble, Lord Henry swears revenge.

The second scene is set in the park. After an introduction with a prominent and charming part for harp, Lucy and her companion Alice appear, and in a highly ornate aria Lucy tells the legend of a nearby fountain, haunted by the ghost of a girl whose presence acts as a warning of Lucy's fate; but, in a brisker and more brilliant section, she turns her thoughts to Edgar and her happiness in his love. Edgar himself then comes in. He tells her that he is being sent to France on Royal business, and in a passionate duet they sing of their continuing fidelity to one another.

While away in France, Edgar sends many letters to Lucy. All are intercepted by Lord Henry, and at the beginning of ACT II, he and Norman are in the castle waiting for Lucy to come. Lord Henry has forged a letter which makes her believe that Edgar no longer loves her. Henry then presses her to marry Lord Arthur Bucklaw. In a long duet, she resists the idea even when Henry tells her that if she refuses, he will die a traitor's death for plotting against the king. Only when the chaplain Raymond tells her that there is no hope for her marriage to Edgar does she finally agree.

The extended finale to the Act begins with a chorus of guests who have been invited to the signing of the marriage contract. Henry tells the prospective bridegroom Lord Arthur, that if Lucy seems sad at the moment, it is only because she cannot forget her mother's death. Then Lucy enters. In great misery she signs the marriage contract; and as she does so Edgar, newly returned from France,

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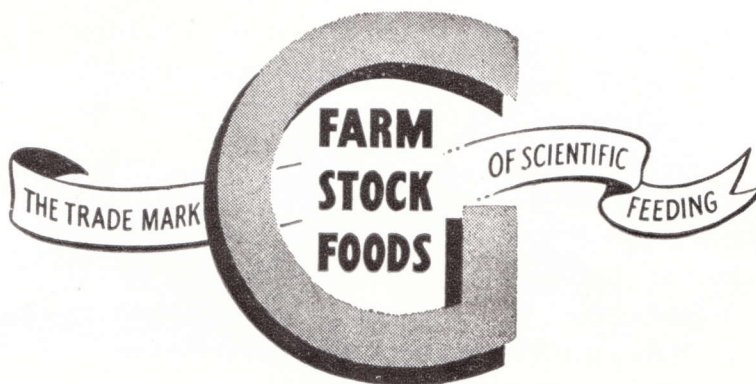
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Lucia di Lammermoor—continued

appears in the hall. In the great sextet that follows, one of the finest numbers in the opera, Edgar pities rather than upbraids Lucy, while she grieves as she realises how she has been tricked. Even the main conspirators are moved. At first Edgar does not believe that Lucy has betrayed him, but triumphantly, Henry shows him the marriage contract.

ACT III opens with the scene still in Lord Henry's castle where the wedding guests are cheerfully celebrating. The chorus is dramatically interrupted as the chaplain enters to tell them that Lucy has gone mad and has killed her husband. In a chorus which Verdi knew and copied in some of his early operas, the guests express their horror. Then Lucy comes in, and after a preparatory recitative sings the famous Mad Scene. The mood is that of Ophelia's madness, and every device of vocal virtuosity is employed to make this *scena* a worthy climax to the opera; and a reminiscence of the love diet of ACT I heightens the effect.

The last Act finds Edgar in the churchyard where his ancestors are buried. He meditates on this and Lucy's fate. He is interrupted by the chorus who tell him that Lucy has died of sorrow. Edgar then kills himself.

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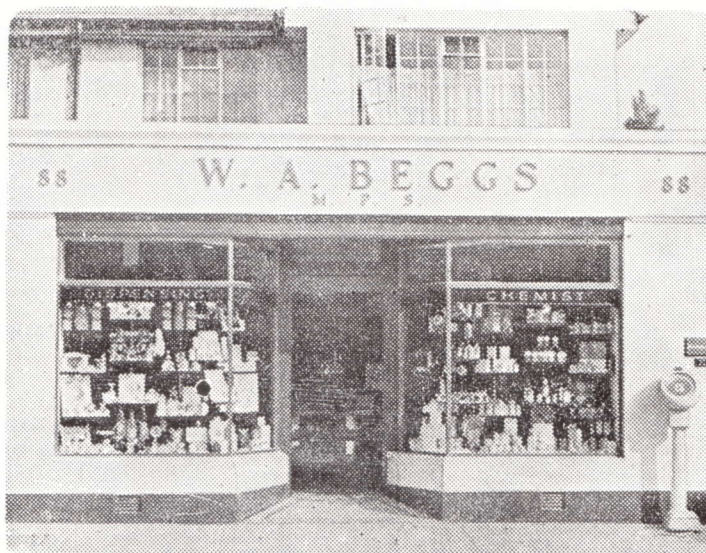
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By GAETANO DONIZETTI

Text by SALVATORE CAMMARANO

CAST:

LUCIA	RENATA ONGARO
ENRICO, LORD ASHTON OF LAMMERMOOR (her Brother) .	FELICE SCHIAVI
ARTURO, LORD ARTHUR BUCKLAW (his Friend) . . .	EZIO BOSCHI
RAIMONDO (Chaplain to Ashton)	LORIS GAMBELLI
NORMANNO (a follower of Ashton)	DERYCK GILMER
ALISA (Attendant to Lucia)	MARGARET SMYTH
EDGARDO, Master of Ravenswood	RUGGERO BONDINO

-
- ACT I. Scene 1. The Grounds of Ashton's Castle.
 Scene 2. The Castle Garden.
- ACT II. Scene 1. Lucia's Apartments.
 Scene 2. Hall of the Castle.
- ACT III. Hall of the Castle.
- ACT IV. A Churchyard.

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LA TRAVIATA

An Opera in Four Acts

By GIUSEPPE VERDI

Text by FRANCESCO MARIA PIAVE

CAST:

VIOLETTA VALERY	AURELIANA BELTRAMI
ALFREDO GERMONT	LORENZO SABATUCCI
GIORGIO GERMONT (her Father)	ENZO SORDELLO
FLORA BERVOIX (Violetta's Friend)	ANNE NIMMONS
GASTONE, Viscount de Letonères	EZIO BOSCHI
IL BARONE DOUPHOL	WILLIAM BAIRD
IL MARCHESE D'OBIGNY	DESMOND McINTYRE
DOCTOR GRENVIL	LORIS GAMBELLI
GIUSEPPE (Violetta's Servant)	HUGH LOGAN
UN COMMISSIONARIO	TOM McCracken
ANNINA (Violetta's Servant)	ROSE HENRY

ACT I. Drawing room in Violetta's house.

ACT II. A house in the country.

ACT III. A room in Flora's house.

ACT IV. Violetta's bedroom.

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La Traviata

When one remembers the immense popularity of *La Traviata* nowadays, it is difficult to believe that it was a failure when first performed in Venice in 1853. Of course, there were many reasons not connected with Verdi's score for this. In the first place the tenor had a cold, then the baritone sulked all night because he had not been given enough to sing and to crown everything, the soprano was a singer whose ample proportions scarcely fitted in with the fact that Violetta was supposed to be dying of consumption.

Since then, however, *La Traviata* has established itself as one of the most popular operas in existence and the world's greatest singers have competed for the privilege of singing the three principal roles.

ACT I.

An orchestral prelude preceeds the First Act, which is set in the salon of Violetta's house in Paris. A party is in progress and Violetta is receiving her guests, among them Flora, a close friend, her physician Dr. Grenvil and her current admirer Baron Duphol.

An admirer, Gaston de Letonères, joins the company bringing with him Alfred Germont, a young man from the country who, Gaston confides to Violetta, is already madly in love with her and who has daily enquired for her during her recent illness.

The Baron tells Violetta that he resents this young upstart's intrusion and when invited to sing, refuses, suggesting that Alfred should do so instead. Alfred agrees, and sings the first verse of the "Brindisi" or "Drinking Song." Violetta sings the second verse with the Chorus joining in the refrain.

A waltz is heard in the next room and as the guests go in to dance, Violetta suddenly feels faint, but persuades the company that it is nothing serious. All leave the salon except Alfred, who tells her that he has loved her since he first saw her a year ago and would wish for nothing better than to be allowed to look after her.

Violetta tells him that all she can offer is friendship and giving him a flower suggests that he should go, but come back when it has faded. He leaves as the guests come in to say farewell and Violetta is left alone on the stage.

Then follows two famous arias which clearly show Violetta's frame of mind. The first is preceded by a recitative in which she muses on the effect the young man has had on her. This is followed by the aria "Ah fors'è lui" (*Could this be he . . .*). The music subsides and with a rapid change of mood follows the recitative "Follie, follie!" (*What sort of folly is this?*) which is succeeded by the cabaletta "Sempre libera" in which she tells herself that the gaiety and joys of Paris will soon help her to forget her young admirer. Alfred's voice is heard off-stage, but Violetta ignores it and continues to the end of the Act with one of the most brilliant soprano arias ever written.

ACT II.

The Second Act finds Violetta and Alfred living together in the former's house in Auteuil, close to Paris. Alfred sings the aria "De' miei bollenti spiriti" and at the conclusion asks Annina, the maid, to explain the absence of Violetta. After some show of reluctance, Annina admits that her mistress has gone to Paris to sell her jewellery to help maintain the house. This admission shocks Alfred who decides to go to Paris himself to raise money.

Violetta enters after Alfred's departure, and hears that he has left. She finds a letter from Flora inviting her to a party that night, but no longer interested in such things, casts it aside. A visitor is announced. Violetta admits him thinking it is her lawyer. It is, however, Alfred's father, who has come to save his son from the woman who is obviously going to spell ruin to the entire Germont family as well as Alfred. He asks that Violetta should give up his son, for the sake of his daughter who has prospects of a good marriage, but only if Alfred ceases his association with Violetta.

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La Traviata—continued

The old man is impressed with Violetta's sincerity, particularly when he finds that she is genuinely in love with Alfred, but his plea so touches Violetta that although broken hearted, she agrees to give Alfred up. As Germont leaves she sits down and writes a note in which she accepts Flora's party invitation which is given to Annina to deliver.

Alfred enters and Violetta, although overcome by emotion, tells him that she will await him in the garden. A messenger arrives with a letter from Violetta telling Alfred that she has left him. Before he can recover from his dismay, Germont senior enters and tries to console his son in the famous aria "Di Provenza" in which he recalls their happy home in the south of France.

But during this Alfred has, to his own satisfaction, found a reason for Violetta's departure: she has gone back to Baron Duophol. He sees Flora's invitation and with his suspicions confirmed, leaves the stage to avenge himself.

ACT III.

The scene is Flora's party and the main topic of conversation is the break between Violetta and Alfred. The discussion is interrupted by the arrival of a band of gypsies who dance for the enjoyment of the guests. Alfred, who was originally expected to come as Violetta's escort, arrives alone. He plays cards with Gaston, winning each time.

Violetta enters on the arm of the Baron who, catching sight of Alfred, warns her not to speak to him. The guests go in to supper but Violetta returns to plead with Alfred to leave the house. Alfred agrees to do so if she will follow him. On her refusal he accuses her of loving the Baron.

Violetta admits this, whereupon Alfred goes to the door of the room where the guests are having supper and summons them to see the woman who has kept him in luxury. Throwing his winnings at Violetta's feet he calls on them to witness that he has paid his debt.

The guests are in a state of consternation and they turn on Alfred just as Germont enters. He denounces his son and the Act ends with the Baron throwing his glove at Alfred's feet.

ACT IV.

Violetta is dying and the curtain rises on her asleep in bed. The famous prelude needs no introduction to listeners and it sets the stage splendidly for this extremely effective scene. Violetta awakens and calls for Annina. The curtains are drawn back and Dr. Grenvil enters and attempts to cheer up his patient although he confides in Annina that the end is not far off.

Annina leaves with the Doctor, and Violetta takes a crumpled letter from her bosom and begins to read it to the accompaniment of the love-theme. The letter is from Germont. "The duel has taken place, the Baron is wounded but is recovering. I have told Alfred of your sacrifice and he is returning to ask your forgiveness and I shall come with him."

The effect of the spoken voice at this point is extremely striking and poignant and immediately she has read it Violetta exclaims "E tardi" (*Too late!*) and sings the lovely "Addio del passato," her farewell to the world—and love.

A carnival crowd pass the window and suddenly Violetta, hearing that Alfred is outside, rushes to the door to embrace him. They sing the famous duet "Parigi, o cara" in which they plan to get away from Paris as soon as possible.

Violetta takes a weak turn and the doctor is sent for. He arrives accompanied by Germont who is shocked to find her so ill. Violetta takes a little picture of herself when young from a casket and gives it to Alfred. The voices blend in an ensemble and, to the music which accompanied the reading of the letter, Violetta, in a faint voice, tells them that she feels life returning to her . . . she is regaining her strength. "Oh joy" she cries as she falls back dead.

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Nineteenth Century Italian Opera

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One can forgive George Bernard Shaw such views. When he was a music critic some seventy years ago, the older Italian style was holding up the appreciation of the "modern" music of Wagner and his followers. Given his temperament and general view of life, it is hardly surprising that he should have ridiculed its conventions. More recent writers should know better, for their mistake is an obvious one. Opera is greater than the sum of its component parts, and though the music or dramatic action in itself often seems weak, the total effect can still enrapture us.

The music of the Italian composers early in the last century looks, on paper, thin indeed. The simplest of harmonies, the use of the orchestra as what has been called "a great banjo," and a melody which seems to lack rhythmic guts all help to give an impression of pernicious anaemia. Yet performed in the true tradition, with voices capable of delicate coloratura, and with singers capable of improvising variations in the repeated sections of their arias, this music was successful in its own day and can be in ours. The improvised variants of the decorative melody were an essential part of the tradition (as we know from Clara Novello's memoirs), and extemporisation done well adds an excitement to music which has been lost in more recent times, when fidelity to the written note has become an inhibiting fetish. The only drawback to improvisation is that the composer is restricted to simple harmonies and accompaniments; but this, to the Italian audience, was a price worth paying.

When Verdi did away with this style of singing it was not all gain. His interests changed less because of his impatience with his musical forbears—his earliest operas have some finely etched arias in the manner of Bellini and Donizetti—than because of changing circumstances. His first success, *Nabucco*, achieved fame through its patriotic choruses, which appealed to audiences at a time when the demand for Italian freedom and unity was every bit as strong as the anti-colonial cries of our own time. Thereafter, he tried to repeat his success with similar choruses in each opera. He even managed to include a chorus of patriotic Scotsmen in *Macbeth*, and late in life he still had a liking for them, as *Aida* shows. Improvisation in the singing of patriotic choruses is, as our national anthem teaches us, all too common—and all too disastrous. The whole point of the genre is simplicity,

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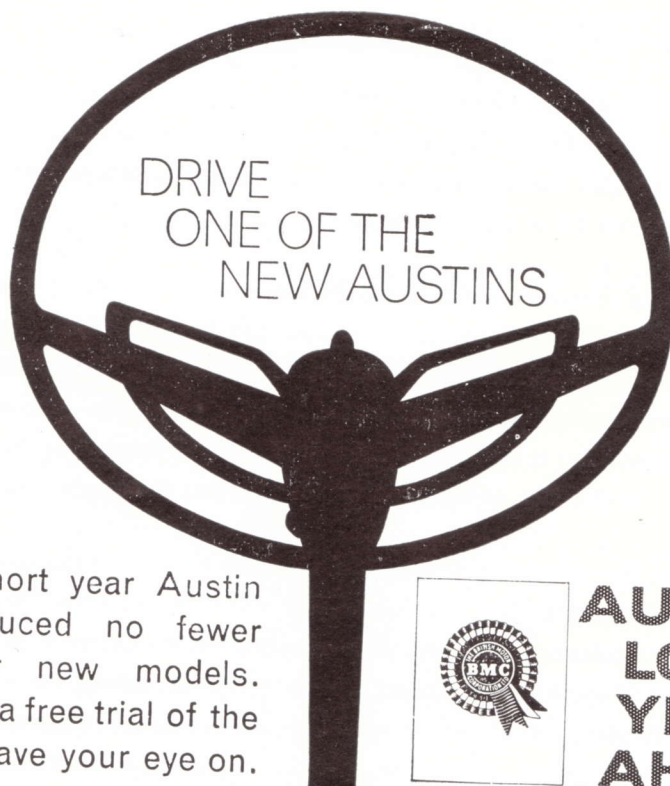
with strong rhythms which can be remembered and sung en masse. Verdi grasped this and his whole melodic style changed. Not just the choruses of his operas but many of the arias too are based on short rhythmic patterns which are repeated and repeated until they become unforgettable (Violetta's "Addio del passato" in Act III of *La Traviata* is a perfect example).

The same chain of circumstances changed the nature of the drama. The nobility of the gentlemanly funeral pyres of Bellini and Donizetti became the body-in-the-sack of *Rigoletto* and the frightening reality of the burning witch in *Il Trovatore*. But in spite of a new realism in Verdi's operas, his essential interest remained the same as that of the earlier composers—the musical expression of human emotion. A legend has it that the initial failure of *La Traviata* was due to an all too stout consumptive heroine. Verdi's own explanation was simply that the singing was bad.

The truth is that the Italians have never had the same interest in dramatic reality that nations like our own have hardened into their traditions. The spoken drama lives a precarious life in Italy, and feeds hungrily on translations. The very style of acting ignores everyday life both in the manner of gesture and the pace of speaking. The novel, which thrives on realism, has never caught on in the same way as it has in England; and even the realist films which Italians have specialised in are better appreciated abroad than at home. It is no wonder that the opera librettists have always looked to foreign lands for their stories. *Lucia di Lammermoor* is only one of several operas to seek inspiration in Sir Walter Scott; Shakespeare has provided countless opera books. Spanish (*Il Trovatore*, *Simon Boccanegra*) and French writers (*Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *La Bohème*) have been ransacked time after time.

All these, in the end, are reduced to their basic meaning by the librettists, who find in them a series of emotional scenes which will string together to stimulate a composer's imagination. Motivation of character may be weak, dramatic continuity almost non-existent; no matter, good opera may result. The minimum of dramatic illusion combined with the strength of even the simplest music produces an art of universal and powerful appeal. Most people, seeing an opera done well, would agree with Charles Burney who wrote: "An opera, at the worst, is still better than a concert merely for the ear, or a pantomime entertainment for the eye. Supposing the articulation to be wholly unintelligible, we have an excellent union of melody and harmony, vocal as well as instrumental, for the ear." Only those who, like Wagner and his followers, demand that opera be some sort of religious ritual, would deny that nineteenth century Italian opera confirms Burney's judgement most firmly. And there is a simple acid test. Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélias*, now a hundred and twelve years old, scarcely holds the stage today. *La Traviata* is only five years younger; but in very much better health.

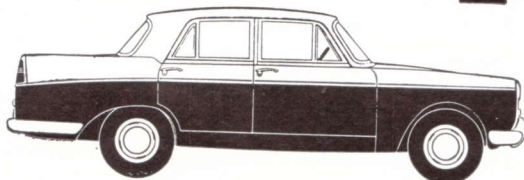
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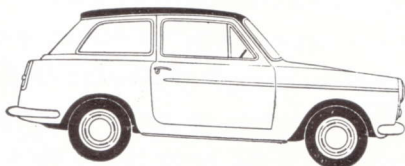
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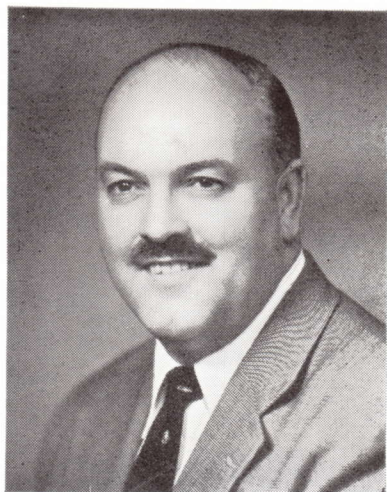
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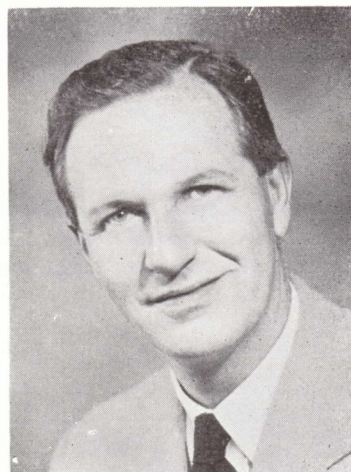
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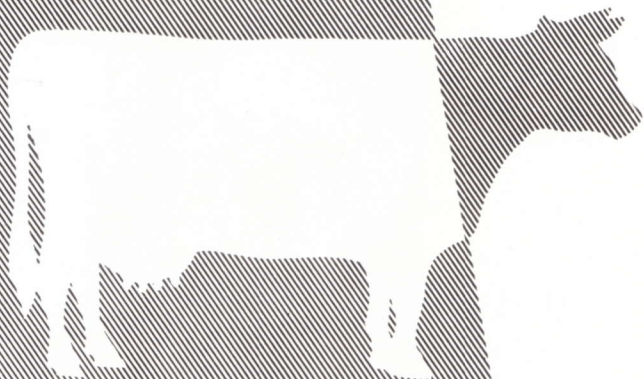
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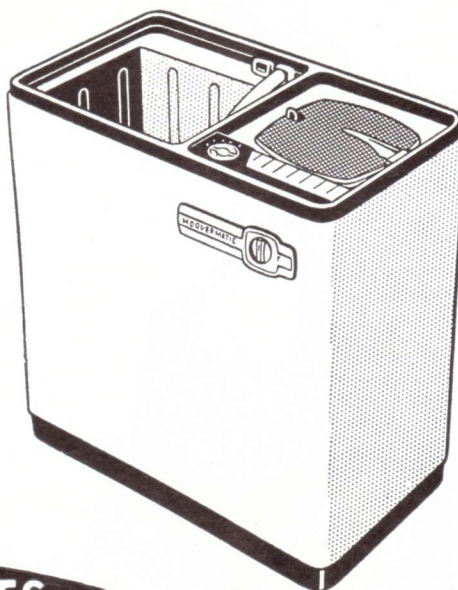
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ANNE NIMMONS (*Flora*)

Former member of Three Arts Operatic Society, for whom she has sung leading roles in musical comedy. Has been successful in local competitions, winning Drinkwater Cup in 1956, Soprano Solo in 1958 and Operatic Solo in 1959 at Belfast. In 1956 was runner-up in Kathleen Ferrier Memorial Competition. Often sings at recitals and concerts.

ROSE HENRY (*Annina*)

A Mezzo-Soprano and a member of Ulster Operatic Company. Took principal part of Countess Ceprano in *Rigoletto*.

MARGARET SMYTH (*Alisa*)

Comes from a well-known Belfast musical family. Has won the Drinkwater Cup, Soprano Solo and Rose Bowl in Belfast Musical Festival. Sang part of *Trasquita* in the Society's first production of *Carmen* and has also done numerous recitals.

WM. BAIRD (*Baron*)

Commenced singing career as treble in St. Anne's Cathedral Choir, and has since won many prizes at festivals as baritone, including Bessie McKisack Trophy at Belfast. Played part of Dancairo in Society's tour of *Carmen*. Also sang the part of Wagner in last year's production of *Faust*.

TOM McCracken (*Un Commissionario*)

Has had eight years' experience in opera including *Meritana*, *Lily of Killarney*, *Song of Norway*, etc. Sings in church choir. Has sung at many local concerts and was Liliast Pastia in *Carmen*.

In accordance with its policy of providing the maximum opportunity to local singers to become experienced in Grand Opera, the Executive Committee has allocated minor principal roles in these operas to the under-noted members of chorus, and wishes to thank them for the way in which they have responded to the additional calls upon their time and talent.

DERYCK GILMER (*Normanno*)

Commenced singing career as treble in St. Anne's Cathedral Choir, and was a prizewinner at Belfast and many Provincial Festivals. Has sung leading roles in Gilbert and Sullivan.

DESMOND McINTYRE (*Marchese D'Obigny*)

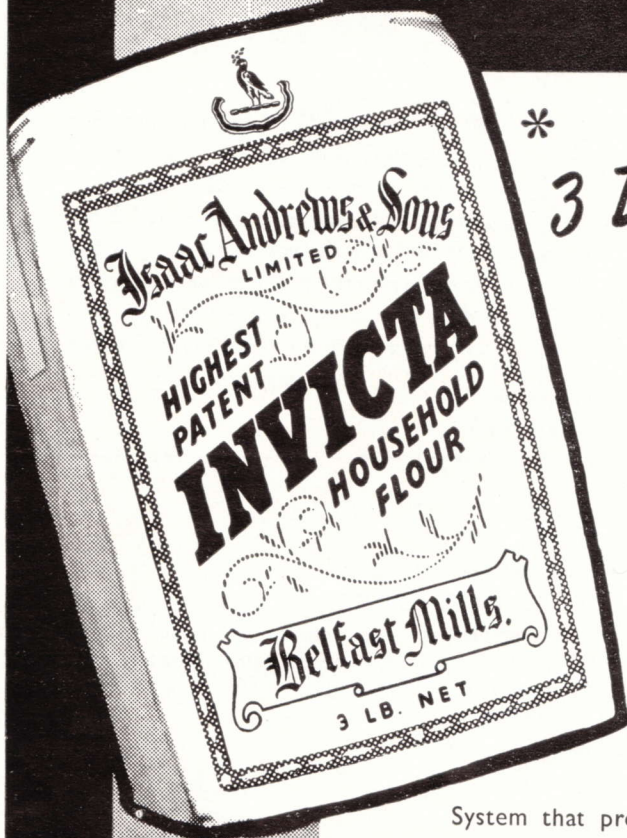
Began singing career as choir boy in St. Anne's Cathedral where he recently returned singing bass. Was a member of the New Lyric Opera Company before joining Grand Opera Society of Northern Ireland. For their first production of *Rigoletto* played one of the "small part" roles in that opera. This is his third season with the Company.

HUGH LOGAN (*Giuseppe*)

Has been a member of the Chorus since the beginning of the Society. Sings his first minor role this season.

MARGARET ESPIE (*Understudy for Annina*)

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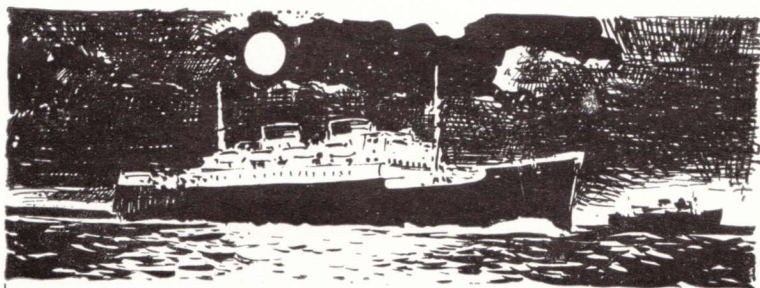
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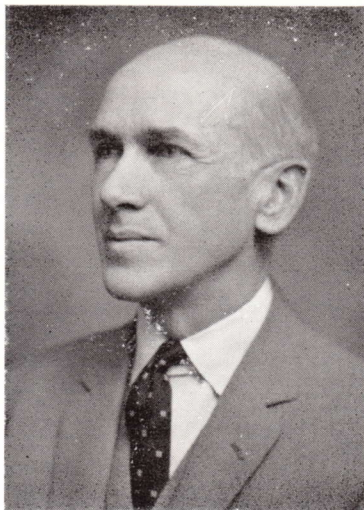
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